

2002-2003
Migratory Game Bird
Regulations For
WATERFOWL
AND
COOT
SEASONS

FLORIDA
FISH AND WILDLIFE CONSERVATION COMMISSION
FARRIS BRYANT BUILDING
TALLAHASSEE, FL 32399-1600

An Equal Opportunity Agency

MAJOR CHANGES FOR THE 2002-2003 SEASON

The season for canvasbacks is closed and their taking is prohibited. The season for pintails has been reduced to a 30-day season, which will occur November 23 – December 1 and December 7 – 27, with a daily bag of one bird. During the remainder of the regular waterfowl season (December 28 – January 26), the taking of pintails is prohibited.

NOTICE TO HUNTERS: PERMANENT DUCK BLINDS

Hunters are encouraged to refrain from constructing permanent duck blinds in public water bodies. These blinds reduce aesthetic value for some citizens, are potential navigation hazards, and are a source of territorial conflict among hunters. Furthermore, constructing permanent blinds in sovereign waters may be a violation of Florida Department of Environmental Protection's regulations. Blinds that pose a navigation hazard in public waters are subject to removal. Instead, hunters should consider using temporary blinds (for example, those made from vegetation such as palm fronds, reeds, or dog fennel) or portable, boat blinds.

MIGRATORY GAME BIRD HUNTING

Migratory game birds are all wild species of ducks, geese, brant, coots, gallinules, rails, snipe, woodcock, and mourning and white-winged doves. There is no open season in Florida on geese (except Canada geese on Lake Seminole, Jackson County and light geese west of the Suwannee River), brant, purple gallinule, canvasback or harlequin duck. Other migratory game birds may be taken only during seasons specified in this digest or the brochure *Migratory Game Bird Regulations For Dove, Snipe, Woodcock, Rail, Moorhen and Early Waterfowl Seasons and Regulations for Crow*.

DAILY BAG AND POSSESSION LIMITS: The daily bag limit is the maximum number of birds of each species that may be taken or possessed during the legal shooting hours of any one day. No person may possess more than one daily bag limit of freshly killed birds

while in the field or while returning from the field. No person shall give, put or leave any migratory game birds at any place or in the custody of another person unless the birds are tagged by the hunter with the following information: (a) the hunter's signature, (b) the hunter's address, (c) the total number of birds involved, by species, and (d) the dates such birds were killed. No person may possess freshly killed birds during the closed season. Tagging is required if the birds are being transported by another person for the hunter or if the birds have been left for cleaning, storage (including temporary storage), shipment or taxidermy services. No person shall transport within the United States any migratory game birds, **except** doves and band-tailed pigeons (*Columba fasciata*), unless the head or one fully feathered wing remains attached to each such bird at all times while being transported from the place where taken until they have arrived at the personal abode of the possessor. The wanton or willful waste of wildlife is prohibited. All migratory game birds shall be retrieved, if possible, and retained in the custody of the hunter in the field.

LAWFUL MEANS AND METHODS: Shotguns not larger than 10-gauge (shotguns capable of holding more than three shells must be plugged to a three-shell capacity with a one-piece filler that cannot be removed without disassembling the gun), long and compound bows and arrows, falconry, dogs, artificial decoys, and manual or mouth-operated bird calls.

Hunting is permitted in the open or from a blind or other type of concealment (except a sinkbox) or from a floating craft.

NON-TOXIC SHOT: Non-toxic shot approved by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service must be used when hunting ducks and coots in all areas of the state. The *possession* of shotshells loaded with any type of shot other than steel, bismuth-tin, tungsten-iron, tungsten-polymer, tungsten-matrix, tungsten-nickel-iron or other nontoxic shot approved by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is prohibited when hunting ducks, geese and coots in Florida.

UNLAWFUL MEANS AND METHODS: The following may **not** be used to take or attempt to take migratory game birds:

- Trap, snare, net, crossbow, rifle, pistol, swivel gun, shotgun larger than 10-gauge, punt gun, battery gun, machine gun, fish hook, poison, drug, explosive or stupefying substance.
- A shotgun capable of holding more than three shells that is not plugged to a three-shell capacity with a one-piece filler that cannot be removed without disassembling the gun.
- A sinkbox (a low-floating device having a depression affording the hunter a means of concealment beneath the surface of the water).
- Hunting from or with the aid or use of a car or other motor-driven land conveyance or any aircraft, except that paraplegics and single or double amputees of the legs may hunt from any stationary motor vehicle or stationary motor-driven land conveyance. "Paraplegic" means an individual afflicted with paralysis of the lower half of the body with involvement of both legs, usually due to disease of or injury to the spinal cord.
- Hunting from or by means of any motorboat or sailboat unless the motor has been completely shut off and/or the sail furled, and its progress therefrom has ceased.
- By the use or aid of live decoys. All live, tame or captive ducks and geese shall be removed for a period of 10 consecutive days prior to hunting and confined within an enclosure which substantially conceals such tame birds from the sight of migratory waterfowl.

- Using records or tapes of migratory bird calls or sounds, or electrically amplified imitations of bird calls.
- By driving, rallying or chasing birds with any motorized conveyance or any sailboat to put them in the range of hunters.
- By the aid of baiting (placing feed such as corn, wheat, salt or other feed to constitute a lure or enticement) or hunting on or over any baited area. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service regulations state that a baited area is considered to be baited for 10 days after removal of the bait.
- Violations of state migratory bird hunting regulations are also federal violations.
- Additional federal hunting regulations may apply on federal public hunting areas.

LICENSE AND STAMP REQUIREMENTS

All persons taking or attempting to take migratory game birds are required to have a valid Florida Hunting License, Sportsman's License, Lifetime Hunting License, Lifetime Sportsman's License, or Five-year Hunting License and a free Migratory Bird Permit. In addition to a hunting license and Migratory Bird Permit, hunters taking or attempting to take ducks or geese are required to have a Florida Waterfowl permit (\$3.00 plus issuance fee) and a Federal Duck Stamp (\$15.00). Persons possessing a Florida Resident Sportsman's License, Lifetime Sportsman's License, Lifetime Hunting License, or, if purchased before July 1, 1998 a Five-year Hunting License need only the Migratory Bird Permit and the Federal Duck Stamp to take or attempt to take ducks or geese. The Sportsman's License, Lifetime Sportsman's License, Lifetime Hunting License, and, if purchased before July 1, 1998, a Five-year Hunting License include the Florida Waterfowl permit. Federal Duck Stamps are available at U.S. Postal Service offices. All other licenses and permits are available at county tax collectors' offices or their subagents. In addition, Florida hunting or fishing licenses may be purchased 24 hours a day with a credit card by calling toll-free 1-888-HUNT-FLORIDA (1-888-486-8356) or on-line through the FWC's web site at www.floridaconservation.org. A convenience charge of up to \$3.95 will be added in both cases.

Exemptions: Residents 65 years of age or older; Georgia residents 65 years of age or older possessing a Georgia Honorary Hunting and Fishing Certificate and proof of age; residents totally and permanently disabled possessing a disability license; and any resident who is a member of the Armed Forces of the United States, who is not stationed in this state, while home on leave for 30 days or less, upon submission of orders are only required to have the Federal Duck Stamp. Resident senior citizens, Georgia senior citizens, resident disabled, and servicemen home on leave are exempt from hunting license, Migratory Bird Permit, and Florida Waterfowl permit requirements. Children under 16 years of age are exempt from hunting license, Migratory Bird Permit, Florida Waterfowl permit, and Federal Duck Stamp requirements.

WATERFOWL AND COOT SEASON

Open Season: First Phase—November 23 through December 1. Second Phase—December 7 through January 26. Pintail season is open only during November 23 – December 1 and December 7 – 27.

Shooting Hours: One-half hour before sunrise to sunset.

Bag Limit:

Duck -- The daily bag limit of ducks is six. The six-duck limit shall consist of no more than one black duck; one mottled duck (Florida duck); one fulvous whistling-duck; one pintail (only during the pintail season); two redheads; two wood ducks; three scaup; four scoters; and four mallards (no more than two of which may be females). All other species of duck (except canvasback and harlequin ducks) may be taken up to the six-duck daily limit. The possession limit is two days' bag limit.

Taking or attempting to take canvasbacks or harlequin ducks is prohibited. Taking or attempting to take pintails during December 28 – January 26 is prohibited

Coot -- Daily limit 15; possession limit 30.

Merganser -- Daily limit 5, only one of which may be a hooded merganser; possession limit 10, only two of which may be hooded mergansers.

LIMITED WATERFOWL AND COOT SEASONS

Leon County and Lake Miccosukee in Leon and Jefferson counties--Waterfowl hunting is permitted only on Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays during the open season and on November 28 and 29, December 24, 26, and 31, and January 2 and 20. Lake Talquin in Gadsden and Leon counties and the Ochlockonee River are open to hunting every day during the regular waterfowl season.

During the open season, waterfowl hunting is permitted only on Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays in the state waters of the Gulf of Mexico in Hernando County north of Raccoon Point and east of Saddle Key as designated by posted signs.

AREAS WITH BOAT MOTOR RESTRICTIONS

The use of internal combustion engines is prohibited any time during the waterfowl and coot season on Lake Iamonia (except as authorized by permit from the Executive Director) and Carr Lake in Leon County. The use of internal combustion engines of more than five horsepower is prohibited any time during the waterfowl and coot season on Lake Miccosukee in Leon and Jefferson counties.

LIMITED LIGHT GOOSE SEASON

Open Season: First Phase—November 23 through December 1. Second Phase—December 7 through January 26. Light (snow [including blue] and Ross') geese may be taken *only* north and west of the Suwannee River.

Shooting Hours: One-half hour before sunrise to sunset.

Bag Limit: The daily bag limit is 15 light geese; there is no possession limit.

LIMITED CANADA GOOSE SEASON

Open Season: November 23 through January 30. Canada geese may be taken *only* in the Florida waters of Lake Seminole in Jackson County that are south of SR 2, north of the Jim Woodruff Dam, and east of SR 271.

Shooting Hours: One-half hour before sunrise to sunset.

Bag Limit: The daily bag limit is five Canada geese; the possession limit is ten Canada geese. Taking or attempting to take brant or geese (except as described above) is prohibited.

YOUTH WATERFOWL HUNTING DAYS

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission have established February 1 and 2 as Youth Waterfowl Hunting Days. Children under the age of 16, supervised by an adult 18 years of age or older, may hunt waterfowl, coots, and common moorhens on February 1-2. Shooting hours, daily bag limits and species restrictions are the same as for the regular waterfowl and coot season and common moorhen season. Light (snow [including blue] and Ross') geese may also be taken north and west of the Suwannee River during the youth waterfowl days. The daily bag limit for light geese is 15, no possession limit. Canada geese may be taken during the youth waterfowl season *only* in the Florida waters of Lake Seminole in Jackson County that are south of SR 2, north of the Jim Woodruff Dam, and east of SR 271. The daily bag limit for Canada geese is 5, and the possession limit is 10. Only children under 16 may hunt. Adult supervisors are prohibited from hunting while accompanying youths during the Youth Waterfowl Hunting Day.

REPORT BAND NUMBERS TWO WAYS

1. BY PHONE: 1-800-327-BAND (1-800-327-2263)
2. ON THE INTERNET: <http://www.pwrc.nbs.gov/bbl/> then follow the link entitled "How to Report a Bird Band."

You may report by telephone or on the Internet any banded ducks or other migratory game birds that you shoot. Please report these bands. Band recovery information is critical to good management and helps ensure that we can continue to provide duck hunting opportunities. By reporting this information, you will be able to find out when and where your bird was banded. The band is yours to keep. Thanks for your cooperation.

THE MIGRATORY BIRD PERMIT AND HARVEST INFORMATION PROGRAM

Migratory game bird hunters in Florida need to have the Migratory Bird Permit checked on their hunting licenses or a Migratory Bird Permit attached to their license. To get the box checked or to receive the permit, you just have to fill out a short questionnaire when you buy your hunting license. That's all it takes to validate your hunting license for hunting migratory game birds. It's free, but you have to do it if you're going to hunt ducks, geese, coots, common moorhens, rails, snipe, woodcock, mourning doves, or white-winged doves.

The information you provide when you obtain a Migratory Bird Permit is used in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's **Harvest Information Program (H.I.P.)**. H.I.P. is a system to enable the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to get a more accurate reading on how many migratory birds hunters take each year. H.I.P. will enable wildlife agencies to set season dates and bag limits to provide hunters with as much opportunity as possible, because they will be working with more accurate figures than ever before.

In the past, anti-hunting groups have cited the lack of accurate harvest information during their legal challenges of hunting seasons in some states. Information from H.I.P. will help preserve hunting and justify it as a valuable wildlife management tool during future court challenges.

Some hunters will receive surveys later in the season to record the numbers and species of birds they take during migratory bird hunting seasons. If you receive one of the surveys in the mail, filling it out is optional but extremely important to the future of migratory bird hunting in Florida and the whole country.

Completing the H.I.P. questionnaire to get the Migratory Bird Permit box checked on your hunting license is required by federal law before you hunt migratory game birds. It is illegal to hunt migratory game birds if you don't take that step.

Hunters who have Lifetime or Five-year licenses should contact their county tax collector's office or the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission for H.I.P. questionnaires. Others should fill out the questionnaire and turn it in when they purchase their hunting licenses. Exemptions to the H.I.P. requirement include migratory game bird hunters who are under 16 years old, 65 years old or older, military personnel who are home on leave, hunting on their own homestead property or their parents' or minor child's homestead property or certified totally and permanently disabled.

For additional information on federal hunting regulations or violations, contact U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Special Agents: Jacksonville - (904) 232-2580, St. Petersburg - (727) 570-5398, or Panama City - (850) 769-0552.

This agency and the Department of Interior prohibit discrimination by race, color, nationality, age, sex or handicap. If you believe you have been discriminated against in any program, activity or facility of this agency, write to: Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, 620 South Meridian Street, Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1600; or to: Office of Human Relations, USFWS, Department of Interior, Washington, D.C. 20240.